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training and culture of those who are graduated from the high school to enter immediately upon the duties of active life.

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THE MORAL PROBLEM IN THE PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM

If the supreme test of life is the unintermittent adaptation of the organism to its surroundings, then we must feel that in the intellectual life of man, or in the existence of the institutions which embody his ideals, critical opposition is a factor to be freely reckoned with as one of the forces tending to ensure the preservation of the fittest forms alone. This applied to our public school system means that we recognize it as something flexible and adaptable, not cast in any mould of rigidity, but capable of adjustment as need may arise, and as legitimate criticism may point out.

But there is some criticism that is not legitimate, or at least, is not fair and scientific, being based on misapprehension. Such, it may be safely said, is the attack which has been made on our system of public schools as not only non-moral in structure, but positively immoral in its effects. Such a charge is too important to be passed over lightly. If true, or if partly true, we may look only for a future of national disaster and ruin such as history tells us is the inevitable result when right conduct is lost sight of by any people.

This much may be conceded to the criticism, that the implied demand is just. Our schools must indeed be not only storehouses of prepared facts, to which, as to Mr. Bellamy's collective dininghalls, children are to be sent to get their mental provender; they must be also places formative of character. It is rightfully demanded that the places where our future citizens and mothers of citizens are being trained, shall afford the certainty of the child obtaining the moral and ethical schooling necessary for good citizenship.

But this demand is of recent growth. It is part of the trend of our times towards collective production ; and even yet there are many who would argue that moral training belongs to the home, and should be given there and there alone. As a necessary differentiation of function it is claimed that the maternal influences, so potent in impressing character, should be restricted to the family life, and that the school should confine itself to its function of mind development, accompanied by such discipline as may be necessary for that purpose, and no more.

The time, however, has gone by when, either commercially or educationally, the family could suffice for its own needs in independence of its neighbors. For nearly two generations the status of the home in social life has been changing. Responsibility still lies where it always lay on the shoulders of the parents ; but there has long been a marked, if unconscious tendency, not to reject the responsibility, but to devolve the acts which fulfil it upon the ability of others to carry out. In this lies the explanation, inter alia, of the rise of the Sunday School, which is itself only an attempt, upon the current collectivist principles, to fulfil the function of religious teaching which is properly native to the home.

As the nearest in kin to the home the church has thus attempted to fill the growing need, but without success. Not that Sunday School and Guild and Circle are not morally effective ; far from it. But that is not the question. No one would claim that they are perfectly effective in their working ; and if they were so, yet they do not cover ground enough. Only a small percentage of our total population is in attendance at places of worship, and the demand which we shall have to meet, as public sentiment grows, will be for some agency which will bring the whole youth of the nation under moral influences.

It follows, from sheer force of circumstances, that the citizen who desires moral education for his children must turn to the public school system as most nearly supplying his needs. He

finds in it an agency which is practically all comprehensive ; democratic in its nature, and therefore consonant with his national ideal ; efficient in working, and, moreover, not hide-bound by tradition, but plastic and capable of almost infinite adaptation. With such a tool, then, ready to his hand, it is not surprising that he desires to use it for purposes for which no educational theory can deny its fitness.

Just here opponents of the public schools join issue. They charge the system not only with failing to supply moral training, but with crushing out spontaneity, which is indeed of the essence of goodness ; with educating a criminal class, and with not counteracting the growth of greater facility for crime in after life by insistence on moral truth and worth during the time of mental plasticity. They charge it with affording a communism of vicious word and habit by bringing children of good homes into contact and contamination with those from immoral surroundings ; and worse charges than these are sometimes made.

These accusations, and with them the indictment for failure to provide moral training, are wholly inaccurate when brought against the public school system. When they do not spring from prejudice, they take their rise from careless observation or from mistake in estimating the meaning of the facts studied, and from consequent wrong deduction. Unfortunately, some teachers have really given away their case to the contrary by trying to produce text-books of ethic, to be used in schools—an effort which is tantamount to admitting that there is a deficiency to be supplied, even as critics claim. But no such admission is to be made ; and if there were, the publication of text-books is no way to meet it. For one thing, the course of studies in most public schools is already quite full enough ; and in the next place, morality is no more to be taught by rote and from a book than is football. It is a thing to be practised, to be lived, not to be given in a recitation.

But, apart from the uselessness, text-books of ethic are superfluous in our public school system. It can be safely maintained that the system is an immense moral power in the

community, and one that will grow greater yet. There may be no formulation of rules of conduct or precepts of morals, but there is what is better, a moral atmosphere for the child to live in, from which his life is built up unconsciously as a tree from the air. It is not said that the public schools are incapable of improvement as a moral force and means to inculcate principles of right living : it *is* asserted that they do provide the moral training needful for good citizenship, and will do so increasingly.

The question is not one of religion, which has many phases, while morality is one and indivisible. Religious belief is purely a matter that concerns the individual, and is to be left to the individual conscience. Right conduct is the goal of all religions, is the product of any one of them when duly observed, and for purposes of good citizenship it is the end not the means that is important. So it is not surprising that we find that our school system "makes for righteousness" by indirect means, for the most part. In the first place, the very system itself, the mere mechanical working, with all that is connoted by discipline, is moral in its tendency. The function of school government is training the pupil in habits of self-control, to the end that he may be self-governing in conduct. The whole aim of the school is to turn what are at first desultory acts into fixed habits, so that at last virtue becomes instinctive, the end of the most perfect moral training, as Aristotle would tell us. Moreover, this fixed habit of virtue presupposes training of the will, with all that that implies of self-denial, subordination of present to future good, resistance to temptation, in short, that conflict of inclination with duty which, voluntarily fought out to a successful issue, makes virtue itself. It is superfluous to point out how school discipline fosters this, why, the simple excellence of regularity and punctuality, in the wide sense of the latter, are themselves enough to ensure such training, if rightly enforced !

These are excellences which any school might give ; but the public schools foster virtues that no other system strengthens

so much, and those of the most important. The trend of our times to combination in production has been already noticed, and the combination of effort which the organization of our public schools makes imperative, is at least in harmony with the age, and affords a valuable preparation for the virtues necessary in the pursuits of afterlife. But what is most important, the public school, drawn from all classes and conditions, is itself a foretaste of social life in its reality. All in the school, as in the community, have equal rights and privileges; the school is an epitome of society, under a paternal government. Hence the civic virtues, forbearance, justice, obedience to authority, are drawn in as the breath of school life. And with them the social graces of kindness, courtesy, and the altruistic virtues are involved, for the school is society, a community with an end and interests common to every one.

Nor is this all. The studies of our public schools are indirect but powerful means of moral training. Of course, character in the teacher is the prime requisite in this and throughout. No brilliance of acquirements can outweigh the solid worth of character in the one who governs and influences. It is something which is more and more taken into account by those in whose hands the power of appointment lies, and increasingly so, though we have a long way to go yet, and the teachers themselves must constantly recognize the need of broad outlook, of self-preparation and watchfulness, above all, recognize the potency of their influence as a formative element in character, and their consequent need of high ideal and dutifulness and veraciousness of living.

But teachers who feel thus will find means to develop the pupil's moral sense in as many ways as there are branches of study. Whether the good and the beautiful be identical or not, it must be admitted that the studies dealing with harmony and color and form can have great moral influence. At least the constant effort after the ideal, and the constant preference for the best even to the good, will afford an analogy which childhood's quick mind will readily draw. Even if it is not

true that to quicken the æsthetic is to quicken the moral sense, art, especially music, and song in chief, gives a vehicle by which to convey inspiration and incentive most powerfully.

Again, in the two great studies of literature and history, not only indirect but even direct moral impulse can be brought to bear on the pupil. Whether in ancient or in modern languages there is ample supply of all that is inspiring, and elevating, and directly productive of a quickened sense of right and wrong. He who has to work with literature, "the great thoughts of noble men set down in fitting and beautiful language," cannot complain that, in having to teach morals with only his usual tools, he has to make bricks without straw. In history, too, we have the most powerful agent possible in education. Here we have the appeal to experience in the life of the individual and of the society, very object lessons in morality, evidence that Righteousness exalteth a nation. For, while we cannot show Justice always overtaking the particular criminal, we can always show it overtaking the crime, as when a Verres goes almost scot free, but has helped bring down the Roman oligarchy in utter ruin. That sin brings recompense in its train, and that the sinner dies, is the one great lesson of history. And so from friend and foe, from hero and villain alike we can learn—*fas est et at hoste doceri*,—without much fear that examples of successful villany will incite our youth to follow them.

Meanwhile, for Physical Science, seemingly the most intractable for our purpose, and for mathematics as subsidiary to Physics, we can also find much moral use. The absolutely certain sequence of effect from cause, the irresistible action of law, the perfect orderliness of the universe are at least ideas training and habituating the mind to conceptions not foreign to morality. It was not for nothing that Plato disappointed his neophytes in philosophy by setting them to mathematics instead of metaphysical speculation.

However, our ultimate proof of the moral effect of our

public schools is in the nation itself. Despite anarchists, society is not yet to be despaired of ; and if we can rightly say, as we may, that our age and our nation are making for higher ideals, and purer living, for all that we mean by righteousness, then not only cannot the great public system be a corrupting influence, but it must be an active, powerful moral agent, whose best results are yet to be seen. And in spite of its yet being perfectable, in spite of its offering many hard problems for solution, a great moral agent many believe it to be.

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THE FUTURE OF THE AMERICAN HIGH SCHOOL

PART I

The thoughtful man looks upon the past with respect, upon the present with both satisfaction and dissatisfaction, and toward the future, as the case may be, with hope or with despair.

In the past, the American high school has been not a product of the college reaching downward, but of the public schools reaching upward. In many States the public system of education has reached still farther upward, and we find the State University an integral part of a grand system, extending from the primary grades through the secondary school—the high school—to higher institutions of learning. Yet in the past the independence of every intermediate system of schools in this great whole was as unquestioned as that of the most advanced institution. Each system did its best for intellectual development on the broadest lines, and no right of the more advanced to dominate the less advanced was either asserted or voluntarily admitted. The gloriously Greek, the great American, idea of free development, as contradistinct to the European or Ro-

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